

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) LABORATORY DIVISION (LD)
TERRORIST EXPLOSIVE DEVICE ANALYTICAL CENTER (TEDAC)

COUNTER-IMPROVISED THREAT COLLABORATION
CENTER (C³) COMMUNITY TOPIC OF INTEREST

MOZAMBIQUE IMPROVISED THREAT OUTLOOK



NOVEMBER 4, 2021

(U) This product expresses the judgements and perspective of the C³ Partners and may not be reflective of the national perspective of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This is intended to be a near-real-time product and subject to revision if additional information is identified. This product is purposely written at the U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY level for widest dissemination. The C³ acknowledges additional information may be available at a higher or more restrictive classification.

(U) Bottom Line Up Front

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) The FVEY nations are each heavily involved with Mozambique through national-level bilateral donations, foreign trade, and international aid, as well as businesses and investors from the respective nations actively partnering with entities in Mozambique, according to diplomatic reporting.^{1,2,3,4,5} Attacks by ISIS-Mozambique (ISIS-M) in Cabo Delgado Province – a region rich in liquid natural gas reserves – have forced civilians to flee their homes. The Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM) have been unable to subdue these attacks, leading to the United States, Southern African Development Community (SADC), Rwanda, Portugal, and the European Union (EU) becoming involved. This involvement includes providing training and augmenting combat personnel to curtail the spread of attacks by ISIS-M. This international involvement – including provision of technology and counter insurgency training – could lead to a shift in tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) employed by ISIS-M. Currently, the group relies on small group tactics like using small arms fire and anti-tank ordnance to exert their control. However, ISIS-M could further leverage their authority if, as a mode of natural tactical progression, they added more sophisticated attack methods such as the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against

(U) Limitations of Unclassified Data

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) The C³ acknowledges limitations in conducting a comprehensive improvised threat outlook for Mozambique because the data pool for this product is solely unclassified information. The C³ invites Partners to expand upon the judgements provided in this document with their respective information about the topic and the future implications that can be drawn, using this C³ product as a starting point for analysis. (The information for this product was current as of November 3, 2021.)

government and civilian targets.

(U) Mozambique Background

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) Mozambique was a former colony of Portugal, gaining its independence in 1975 after 10 years of fighting, followed by a lengthy civil war from 1977 to 1992. It has been a self-governing country since 1994. Mozambique has attracted international attention and investment since the discovery of major reserves of liquefied natural gas in the northeast region of the country, according to gas industry reporting.⁶ This region has historically contended with insurgencies by various groups, most recently by the terrorist organization ISIS-M. Target selection by ISIS-M has expanded beyond Mozambican civilian and governmental targets, now impacting other countries, to include the FVEY nations.⁷

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(U) Mozambique Location

(U) Source: Map Image | CountryReports | "Mozambique Facts and Culture" | www.countryreports.org/country/Mozambique.htm | Accessed 10 October 2021

(U) The Rise of ISIS-M

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) ISIS-M is an Islamist militant group active in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique. Members pledged allegiance in 2017 and were acknowledged by ISIS-Core as an affiliate in August 2019, according to diplomatic reporting.⁸ Since 2017, ISIS-M has attacked security forces and civilians, and is estimated to have killed more than 2,300 people since they began their violent extremist insurgency in an effort to establish an Islamic State in the area, according to diplomatic reporting.⁹ In August 2020, Major General Dagvin R.M. Anderson – Commander of the United States Special Operations Command Africa – briefed the United States Department of State and stated, according to diplomatic reporting, that ISIS-Core provides training, education, and additional resources to ISIS-M.¹⁰ The International Crisis Group echoed this reporting to the United Nations and indicated that attacks by Mozambique militants have become more sophisticated after they received training from an ISIS-linked bomb maker who travelled to Mozambique in 2020.¹¹

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) The early influences for ISIS-M were the teachings of Islamic cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed, an extremist from Kenya designated by the United Nations for providing terrorist support to Somalia's al-Shabaab. After he was killed in 2012, his followers conducted protests and riots in the coastal region of Mombasa. Many of his followers migrated and settled in northern Mozambique. Leaders in the region present lectures inspired by him and distribute videos of his speeches, along with other propaganda. The militant group has engaged in insurgent fighting against Mozambique's government since late 2017, according to the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a western-based think tank.¹²

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(U) ISIS-M Insurgents

(U) Source: Media Article | Global Risk Insights | 4 October 2020 | <https://globalriskinsights.com/2020/10/mozambiques-insurgency-prospects-for-regional-insecurity/> | 4 October 2021

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) Throughout 2017 and 2018, ISIS-M gained traction throughout the region by conducting violent attacks on the local population, and in some areas controlling the territories and cities. In 2018, the group was reportedly linked to 120 incidents that killed 38 people from January to November.¹³ Incidents increased in 2019 to 150 attacks that killed over 450 people, according to a western-based think tank.¹⁴ In March 2021, the group seized control of the port town of Palma, which was home to hundreds of foreign workers and a key strategic location for the oil and gas industry. During the attack on Palma, nearly 30,000 locals fled the area to escape the fighting during which a British national was killed, according to western press reporting.¹⁵ The Palma attack attracted the attention of the international community and on 12 July 2021, the EU established a military training mission for the FADM to help develop their capabilities to repel the rise of the Islamic extremists.¹⁶

(U) ISIS-M TTPs Expanding

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) In the early morning hours of 05 October 2017, in the town of Mocimboa da Praia (MDP), Cabo Delgado Province, a group of approximately 30 men attacked three police stations with small arms and machetes. This is the first reported attack by ISIS-M.¹⁷¹⁸ The following year, as the group's number of members grew, they started burning properties to unsettle the populace, beheading locals to instill fear, and employing shoulder-fired and small arm weapons in continued attacks on the FADM.¹⁹ These TTPs represent an expansion of targets from previous attacks that were primarily focused on government officials, police officers, military personnel, and government infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, according to a Future Directions International report.²⁰

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) In March 2020, in a combined land and sea attack to overtake MDP, ISIS-M demonstrated an expanded tactical proficiency against FADM forces. By March 2021, ISIS-M had honed their small unit tactics to include cutting communications and FADM egress routes prior to initiating attacks. Compared to their first attack four years earlier in 2017, ISIS-M was a completely different group as demonstrated in their assault of the port town of Palma in March.²¹ ISIS-M effectively employed these expanded TTPs against the FADM and against private military contractors from Russia and South Africa, who were brought in to aid in combatting the rise of Islamic extremists, according to the RAND Corporation, a western-based think tank.²²

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) With the seizure of weapons and equipment from posts abandoned by the FADM, ISIS-M's weapons arsenal and equipment have improved. ISIS-M captured over 100 assault rifles, heavy machine guns, several mortars and more than 20 shoulder-fired rockets (RPG-7s) from local security forces by the middle of 2020, according to western press reporting.²³ ISIS-M has also captured armored fighting vehicles such as the Shaanxi Baoji Special Vehicles Manufacturing Tiger 4x4 armored fighting vehicles, weapons, and supplies.

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) Based on the success of ISIS-M's current TTPs, they have not needed to further refine their tactics. However, TTPs may shift in response to disruptive forces such as international support for the region, through the augmentation of combat forces, as well as providing military training to the FADM. Examples of recent international support that could spur tactical shifts include:

1. The United States Green Berets deployed to Mozambique to train the Mozambican Marines for two months, according to military press reporting.²⁴

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(U) Captured Shaanxi Baoji Special Vehicles Company Tiger 4x4 armored fighting vehicle with mounted weapon

(U) Source: Social Media | Twitter | 13 May 2020 | <https://twitter.com/CalibreObscura/status/1260588929604083716/photo/1> | 4 October 2021

2. The SADC, for which the President of the Republic of Mozambique is the Chairperson, deployed their standby forces in a counter-terrorism role, according to a body of press reporting.^{25,26,27,28}
3. The Portuguese Government entered into an agreement until 2026 to provide training to Mozambican military personnel, according to Reuters reporting.²⁹
4. The EU established a military training mission to help develop Mozambique's FADM capabilities to repel ISIS-M, according to an EU press release.³⁰
5. Rwanda deployed a 1,000-person force to Mozambique to help combat ISIS-M by fighting alongside Mozambique forces and previously deployed SADC troops, according to Reuters reporting.³¹

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) The international support to Mozambique and the potential of training provided by an ISIS-linked bomb maker could prompt a shift in TTPs employed by ISIS-M to include IEDs as a primary attack method, explosive ambush, and attacks against hardened targets. While the prospective use of IEDs represents a natural progression of TTPs, it is difficult to identify the IED types and configurations ISIS-M would employ. However, the C³ will continue to monitor this situation and report any observed shifts in ISIS-M's TTPs.

(U) Conclusion

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) ISIS-M's evolution from crude weapons used against the local population and FADM to the acquisition of more modern military equipment employed against governmental forces demonstrates the ability to shift TTPs as the targets change. Furthermore, ISIS-M has adopted advanced small unit tactics such as blocking routes of egress for FADM forces and cutting off communications during complex and coordinated assaults on government forces. The equipment and personnel that the international community has provided to the FADM could lead ISIS-M to use IEDs against more advanced international targets in response. The C³ FVEY Partners believe these attacks should continue to be monitored for the potential expansion of TTPs to include IEDs employed by ISIS-M. Importantly, the ISIS-M threat continues to grow though the Rwandan Defence Forces, SADC, and FADM have deployed more forces and regained territory. The addition of IEDs to their TTPs could give ISIS-M the operational advantage, which may lead to requests for further FVEY partner involvement in this conflict.

(U//FOUO/REL TO USA, FVEY) The C³ supports the Five-Eyes (FVEY) community in combating improvised threats globally. The C³ brings together FVEY organizations from the law enforcement, military, science and technology, intelligence, and border protection communities, making the center a unique and powerful asset to the FVEY community. To leverage this asset, the C³ circulates Topics of Interest to answer questions or facilitate discussion on improvised threat topics. The C³ Community Topic of Interest allows for discussion and exploration of topics from the FVEY community and addresses trends in improvised threat TTPs. For more information, or if you wish to discuss the information contained above, please contact the C³ Facilitation Cell at 256-678-2067 or C3_Facilitation_Cell@fbi.gov.

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